



New 10-Year Strategic Plan to Strengthen Vermont's Farm and Food Sector Released

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Vermont's Agricultural Future

During this time in our history, the pandemic has highlighted how important agriculture is to Vermonters and also brought into focus a series of issues that threatened our food system and communities. In response, Governor Phil Scott signed an executive order in February creating a "Future of Agriculture" Commission.

The Governor, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development are planning for the future and ensuring agriculture remains a vibrant and important part of our state's economy and culture. Governor Scott issued the executive

order to create a commission to study and strategize how to best grow and sustain agriculture in the Green Mountain State.

The Vermont Agriculture and Food Systems Strategic Plan: 2021-2030 recently released by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund and our Agency provides in-depth insights and recommendations on how to strengthen our state and regional food system. This plan provides a vision for the future of agriculture and highlights the importance of the 64,000 jobs in Vermont's farm and food system and \$11.3 billion annual economic output generated by our food system.

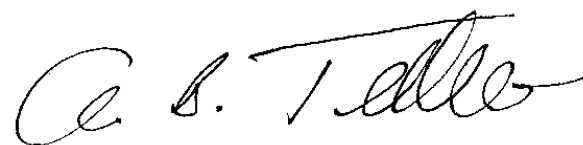
The Governor's Commission on the Future of Agriculture will rely on priority strategies outlined in this plan, as well as insights from industry stakeholders, to deliver recommendations to the Governor in November 2021 for a vibrant and

stable future for Vermont food and agriculture. The Commission will address economic development in the agricultural sectors by helping farmers, producers, and businesses build new markets, grow sales, and create new jobs. The Commission will deliver strategies that continue our environmental progress and facilitate greater inclusivity, access, and diversity. It is important we do this work today and for future generations.

The Commission will be Co-chaired by me and Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary of Commerce and Community Development. As of this writing, Commission members

have not yet been appointed. It is my expectation that members of the Future of Agriculture Commission will represent sectors including maple, dairy, meat, produce, and value added food, and experts in Vermont's food systems to address land use, environmental conversation, and business assistance.

As we recover from the pandemic, Agriculture and Commerce in partnership with the Office of Governor Scott, will continue to advocate for investing in Vermont communities and the work of the people who make their living off the land.



Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Maple Sausage and Waffle Casserole

Easy to make the night before and refrigerate overnight. And it will smell delicious while baking in the morning – or is that dinner because breakfast for dinner is always a good idea! Enough for six people or two very hungry ones.

Ingredients

- 8 frozen homestyle waffles, cubed
- 1 (16-oz) package maple breakfast sausage
- 1 cup shredded Vermont cheddar cheese (or maybe you have another favorite)
- 6 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Cook the sausage in a nonstick skillet over medium heat, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon, until well browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain fat.
2. Grease an 8-inch square baking dish. Add half of



the cubed waffles in a single layer. Top with half of the sausage and 1/2 cup of the cheese. Layer the remaining waffles and sausage and 1/2 cup more cheese.

3. Whisk together the eggs, milk, maple syrup, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl until combined. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the casserole.
4. Wrap the baking dish with plastic wrap and place refrigerator for at least 1 hour, or up to 1 day.
5. Bake at 325°F for 45 to 50 minutes.

Vermont Recognizes National Weights and Measures Week

March 1-7, 2021

By Marc Paquette, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

State and local jurisdictions throughout the country are celebrating Weights and Measures Week which takes place the first seven days of March every year. The date for Weights and Measures Week commemorates the signing of the first United States weights and measures law by President John Adams on March 2, 1799. The evolution of a uniform system of weights and measures has had a profound and necessary impact on society and government. It provides uniformity and confidence in the marketplace for both consumers and businesses. All participants in an economy are more likely to engage openly in trade if they are assured of fairness in transactions. Weights and Measures programs contribute greatly to economic development by promoting equity in the marketplace to all stakeholders.

The inspections conducted by field staff provide equity in the marketplace and consumer protection by testing and inspecting commercial devices used in commerce. Each year the Vermont program inspects over 6,000 gas pumps, 425 fuel oil truck meters, 225 propane truck meters, thousands of scales, and packages. Inspectors conduct hundreds of price verification inspections, testing the accuracy of laser scanning systems in retail outlets. This work promotes consumer protection by ensuring that these devices are accurate and correct and by also monitoring pricing integrity and weighing and measuring practices where commercial transactions occur.

This year, the Weights & Measures program is highlighting the new Large Capacity Scale Truck which



New large capacity scale truck – unloading the calibrated weight cart.

arrived several weeks ago. This new vehicle will be used to test and inspect large capacity scales used in industry and service applications. Inspectors test and inspect these devices located at mines, feed plants, transfer stations, asphalt plants, recycling locations, and scrap metal yards. The scales tested are designed to weigh trucks and the capacities may reach 200,000 lbs. The new testing vehicle is a state-of-the-art unit which contains a calibrated 4,000 lb. weight cart which can hold 20,000 lbs. of certified weight. It is designed to meet all testing specifications and requirements as adopted by The National Conference on Weights & Measures as well as test procedures contained in Vermont adopted regulations published by The National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST). The testing unit has a hoist and the ability to carry and unload the weight cart and certified weights for each inspection.

The Weights and Measures Metrology Laboratory has also expanded its scope of operation to include the calibration of weight carts giving the program total integration and traceability of all standards as well as tests procedures. In addition to the calibration of weight carts, the Weights and Measures Metrology Laboratory staff maintain the state standards, conduct calibrations on weighing and measuring artifacts, provide calibration traceability, and submit annual audits for laboratory certification. Each year the laboratory tests thousands of hydrometers uti-



The Weights & Measures Program new large capacity scale truck.



The Weights & Measures Program new large capacity scale truck and test cart.

lized by the maple industry, weights ranging in size from 1,000 lbs. to 0.001 lb. and numerous test measures used in the inspection and calibration of thousands of fuel pumps.

Weights & Measures inspectors work to ensure accurate and correct devices are used for sales of goods and services to consumers, work toward improving pricing accuracy in retail stores, and address many consumer concerns that are brought to the office's attention. Weights and Measures Week serves as a reminder of the great value consumers receive from Weights and Measures Programs. The next time you purchase gas, take a trip to the grocery store, or receive a delivery of fuel at your home, remember that the staff from the Weights and Measures Program are working diligently to ensure accuracy, fairness, and protection to all.

For more information about the Agency of Agriculture's Weights and Measures program, contact Marc Paquette, Weights and Measures Chief, Marc.Paquette@vermont.gov or 802-828-2426.

\$150K in Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grants Available

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center funds \$10k - \$25k in dairy agritourism grants

By Kathryn Donovan, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant Program application is currently open to dairy producers, processors, and producer associations headquartered in Vermont and the greater Northeast region. This grant program, offered through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center and hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, strives to elevate dairy businesses through agritourism activities across the region.

Agritourism provides opportunities for meaningful impact on consumers' understanding, connection, and loyalty to farmers and value-added processors. Beth Kennett of Liberty Hill Farm in Rochester, who has oper-

ated an agritourism venture on her family dairy farm for 37 years, spoke of the impact for both her farm and for those who visit, "Agritourism goes far beyond economic diversification for our farm. Agritourism creates opportunity for the younger generations of our family to contribute their unique talents; we can integrate vitality in the economic development of our community while showcasing our commitment to the environmental and cultural aspects of our valley. We have the incredible honor of sharing the story of agriculture with our neighbors and new friends from across the country and the world providing a connection for them to the land and the food they eat."

Projects that support multiple dairy farmers and/or processors will be eligible for grant funds for the devel-

opment and marketing of geographically contiguous agritourism activities. Eligible projects will enhance the visibility of dairy businesses, raise awareness and understanding of dairy production practices, and increase consumption of regionally produced dairy products.

Awards will range from \$10,000- \$25,000 apiece, with \$150,000 in total funds available in this round. Grantees will need to show cash and/or in-kind match of at least 50%. Projects are expected to run for approximately 15 months, from May 2021 – July 2022.

Application closes March 16, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST

To learn more and apply, visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities

Questions? Contact Kathryn Donovan, kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov, 802-522-7642.

Additional NE-DBIC Opportunities for Contractors and Service Providers

Service Providers to Contract for Transition to Grazing Technical Assistance

NE-DBIC seeks multiple contractors across the Northeast region to offer localized cohort-based technical assistance for dairy farmers considering transitioning their farm to a grass-based production model. Projects will build on the NE-DBIC pilot cohort model delivery system of technical assistance blended with on-farm events for five dairy producers in southern Vermont, developed and delivered by Cheryl Cesario of the University of Vermont Extension. The contractors selected for these contracts will each propose a workplan which serves a cohort of dairy farmers that are ready to make a transition to a rotational grazing model. Each farmer will receive a mixture of one-on-one and group business and technical assistance over 18-24 months, with grant funds available to them to support transition projects. This opportunity closes in late March.

NE-DBIC Seeks Contractor for Brand Reception Study

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is also seeking a contractor to conduct a consumer study of brand reception value, success stories, and toolkit development for dairy processors. The contractor will study consumer perceptions of brand identities to better understand strategies dairy businesses can use to sell their products to specific consumer segments or market channels. The contractor will then create a sophisticated cataloging of the distinct ways that consumers receive brand value from case studies of successful dairy processors across categories, from conventional fluid milk to farmstead cheese. This cataloged data will inform the contractor's development of a marketing toolkit and set of best practice recommendations for dairy processing businesses in the Northeast (New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey). This opportunity closes in early March.

For more information about these opportunities, please visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities

Questions? Contact Laura Ginsburg, laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov, 802-522-2252.



Asia Kennett, Liberty Hill Farm

Produce Safety Bite: Buildings, Tools & Equipment

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

You're already preparing equipment, tools, and buildings for the growing season. While you're at it, think ahead to prevent contamination of produce with pathogens that could get someone sick.

- 1. Identify food contact surfaces.** Think like a vegetable: from field to farm gate, what parts of tools and equipment touch produce? A food contact surface is any surface that comes in direct contact with a crop during or after harvest, including knives, mechanical harvesters, harvest and storage containers, barrel or brush washers, grading belts, and packaging. Don't forget things that touch water or ice that contacts produce, like dunk tanks or ice bins.

- 2. Inspect and maintain.** Check the conditions of food contact surfaces



you identified. Are they designed and maintained to be easily cleaned? Are there cracks or seams that accumulate dirt, food particles, and microorganisms? As appropriate, repair or replace items and infrastructure to make sure you can clean, and if necessary, sanitize them.

- 3. Set yourself up for success.** Create cleaning and sanitizing routines that work for your farm.
 - Standard Operating

Procedures (SOPs) explaining exactly when and how tasks like cleaning and sanitizing harvest bins should be performed help train employees and

maintain consistency. Post SOPs nearby for quick reference. Need a sample SOP? Contact the UVM Extension Produce Safety Team at producesafety@uvm.edu.

- Restock cleaning supplies like brushes, detergents, and sanitizers that are labeled for use on food contact surfaces.
- Make dedicated locations for clean and dirty items to help identify what is ready to use and what still needs to be cleaned.
- Recordkeeping helps you make sure cleaning happens as intended. Keep your cleaning log

(customizable templates are available), clipboard, and pen nearby for convenience.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) includes requirements for Equipment, Tools, Buildings, and Sanitation. Do you have questions about produce safety or whether your farm is subject to the PSR? The Vermont Produce Program can help you take the next step in growing produce safety on your farm. Contact our team today at AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov, (802) 461-5128, or agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram.

Certified Custom Applicator Operating Fees due March 15

All owner/operators or full-time custom applicators must be certified with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (Agency) to operate within the state of Vermont. Each year operators must submit an annual operating fee of \$30.00 to maintain certification and a license. **For 2021, the deadline to submit this operating fee is March 15, 2021.**

All companies that employ certified custom manure applicators as well as all self-employed certified custom manure applicators should have received a renewal notice in the mail with a form and a request to submit the annual operating fee. If you should have received this mailing and did not, contact the Agency at (802) 828-2431.

Remember that all employees of

custom applicators must receive training on the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) and management practices to reduce risk of runoff when spreading manure. Certified applicators must receive eight hours of training each five-year period to maintain certification. The Agency is working with the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension and local conservation partners to schedule virtual and limited in-person trainings and exam sessions for custom applicators and those seeking certification. Please keep a look out for notifications of available trainings and exam sessions in 2021.

To learn more about the Certified Custom Applicator Program, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/custom-applicator or contact Jenn LaValley at (802) 828-2431.



#Farm24VT Announces Two Free Social Media Trainings for Farmers and Agribusiness

By Laura Hardie, *New England Dairy*

#Farm24VT is a day-long social media celebration of agriculture, food, and dairy in Vermont planned to begin at 5:00 a.m. on May 12.

Throughout this 24-hour period, farmers and others in the agricultural sector just like you will be sharing photos, videos, and stories showing the passion, commitment, and hard work that goes into producing food and other farm products in Vermont.

#Farm24VT is teaming up with New England Dairy to



offer a series of social media workshops this spring for #Farm24VT participants. All workshops are free and open to anyone involved in Vermont agriculture (not just dairy). Registration is now open!

The workshops are: "Take the Mystery Out of Social Media Marketing:

A Beginner's Guide," on March 18, 10-11:30 a.m. on Zoom, and "Level Up Your Social Media Presence: An Intermediate's Guide," on April 15, 10-11:30 a.m. on Zoom.

Visit www.farm24vt.com for more information on how to take the pledge to participate in the social media event, and to sign up for the social media workshops.

#Farm24VT is a project of the Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition and the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance. It is funded in part by a generous grant from Vermont Breakfast on the Farm.

Farm to School Vision Grant

By Trevor Lowell, *VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets*

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is excited to announce a brand-new farm to school funding opportunity, the Farm to School Vision Grant. With this grant, the Agency is looking to fund projects that create or expand opportunities for Vermont youth (ages 0-20) to engage with agriculture, food systems or related fields.

Vermont schools and registered childcare providers are eligible to apply for this one-year grant. Nonprofits

who conduct programming in Vermont are also eligible but must apply as a co-applicant with a school or childcare provider. The maximum award is \$40,000 with a twenty-five percent match requirement.

Strong proposals will address contemporary issues through the lens of agriculture and food systems, and will center Vermont youth in their scope. Examples of some contemporary issues include: climate change, racial and social equity, food security and COVID-19. They will also be defined by a high net impact score—the magnitude of the project's impact on an individual,

multiplied by the number of people impacted. We will be looking for ideas that are scalable, can be sustained beyond the grant period and demonstrate a high likelihood of success. Applicants that show both broad impact and stakeholder engagement will be most competitive.

The anticipated opening date for the grant application is March 5th. More information is available on the Agency's website, <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/businessdevelopment/farm-school-institution/farm-school-vision-grant>. Questions or comments can be directed to Trevor Lowell: trevor.lowell@vermont.gov.

Vermont Breakfast on the Farm Going Virtual for Second Year

Virtual Dairy Farm Tour Set for March 21 at the Miller Farm

by Laura Hardie, *Vermont Breakfast on the Farm*



Vermont Breakfast on the Farm invites the public to a live virtual dairy farm tour on

Sunday March 21, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. Attendees will get a behind-the-scenes tour of the Miller Farm, a 105-year-old organic dairy farm in Vernon, Vermont.

The farm works to provide safe, nutritious, organic milk to Stonyfield Organic to be made into yogurt. They also sell up to 100 gallons of milk a day locally from their on-farm processing facility.

When you sign up for the tour, you will automatically be entered to win a handful of goodies from Stonyfield Organic.

The virtual tour will replace Vermont Breakfast on the Farm's in-person events for the second year. Last year, a virtual farm tour was put on by Breakfast on the Farm at Newmont Farm for 1,800 people in May.

We cannot wait to show you around the Miller Farm as we highlight how they bring local, nutritious dairy products to our tables.

For more information and to register visit www.VermontBreakfastOnTheFarm.com



What is a Specialty Crop?

By Gina Clithero, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

When I first heard the term “specialty crop,” I thought of niche specialty food products, such as elderberry jam, maple-flavored granola, and Vermont wine. I did not think of staple foods like potatoes and onions, nor did I expect that over half of the 6,808 Vermont farms counted in the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture grow specialty crops.

In general, most agriculture products that are not animal products or grain, fiber, and oil field crops are considered specialty crops by USDA. The most common specialty crops we see in Vermont are fruits and vegetables; culinary herbs, spices, and medicinal plants; nursery, floriculture, horticulture, and Christmas trees; honey; hops; maple syrup; and mushrooms. You might be asking yourself, why does this definition even matter? The answer is simple: USDA has funding through the Farm Bill to sup-

port these specific agricultural industries, and we at the Agency of Agriculture want to help ensure those funds address the most important needs of Vermont growers and producers.

Specialty crops contribute to Vermont’s diverse agricultural landscape and add tremendous value to the state and region in terms of providing healthy food, aesthetic and cultural qualities, and local economic development, among many other benefits. According to the 2017 USDA Ag Census, there are over 10,000 acres of farmland in Vermont producing any combination of the specialty crops listed above, in addition to 2.8 million square feet of specialty crops in greenhouse/high-tunnel production, 10,205 honeybee colonies, and 5.9 million maple syrup taps. The specialty crop category is broad and includes food producers as well as businesses that practice horticulture for aesthetic and cultural values, such as nursery operators and Christmas tree farms.

If you happen to fall under the broad category of “specialty crop producers,” then you might be interested in learning more about the Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). The USDA funded Vermont SCBGP invests approximately \$200,000 each year in supporting the long-term viability of specialty crop industries. On January 19, the Agency sent out a request for applications (RFA) for the 2021 funding



opportunity. The deadline to submit pre-applications will be March 1, 2021.

Not ready to apply this year? This grant typically occurs annually, based on available USDA funding, so mark your calendars for January each year to check in on grant availability. Please also note that additional COVID-19 stimulus funding for specialty crops will be

available later this year; stay tuned for details.

If you have ideas for projects that would benefit multiple specialty crop producers and help increase the competitiveness of Vermont specialty crops, learn more on our website and contact our team with any questions at SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov or 802-585-6225.

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/events/month>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: http://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <http://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Required Agricultural Resources (RAPs) Resources: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/rap>
- Agency of Ag’s Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 anytime day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our *Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses* webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Green Acres Dairy, LLC, of Randolph, Vermont to process, package, buy and sell, and transport milk, cream, and butter within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by March 31, 2021.
At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

PRODUCE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT GRANT SPOTLIGHT:

Joe's Brook Farm

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

“Small farmers in New England and Vermont are well-positioned to lead the way when it comes to produce safety,” according to farmer Eric Skovsted of Joe's Brook Farm in Barnet, Vermont – especially with the help of grants that allow farms to improve their standards. Joe's Brook Farm was awarded a Produce Safety Improvement Grant of \$5,000 in 2019 to purchase a rinse conveyor that can clean both vegetables and harvest bins.

In an interview with the Vermont Produce Program, farm owner Eric Skovsted reported that the grant project:

- increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the wash-pack process;
- increased production capacity;
- improved employee satisfaction and retention; and
- provided a collective learning opportunity for multiple Vermont vegetable farms.

Vermont Produce Program: Tell us about Joe's Brook Farm

Eric: Joe's Brook Farm is a 20-acre vegetable and fruit farm. Our sales are split between direct-to-consumer – farmers markets, CSA, farm stand – and wholesale to a range of grocery stores, co-ops, and institutions.

We got started 11 years



Photos courtesy of Joe's Brook Farm



Sending peppers through the rinse conveyor purchased with a Produce Safety Improvement Grant.

ago with one tomato greenhouse, a garden, and one farmer's market. I worked off-farm full time, and my wife Mary was full time on the farm from the start. We've been able to grow with our diverse markets over the years. For the last five years, I've been full-time on the farm.

How do you manage produce safety on your farm?

We have the same risks as any vegetable farm. We mitigate them through a variety of technologies and practices, which are encapsulated in our CAPS [Community Accreditation for Produce Safety] certification. Keeping our produce safe and clean includes considerations such as:

- getting our water tested;
- using Sanidate, an organic-

approved sanitizer, in all of our wash water;

- maintaining cold temperatures;
- keeping [animals] out of our pack area; and
- using irrigation appropriately.

Can you describe your Produce Safety Improvement Grant project?

With the grant we purchased a rinse conveyor. It's a conveyor belt with a stainless steel box on top of it. There are two pumps: one is low-pressure, high-volume, and the other is high-pressure, low-volume. The machine is filled with water, then hooked up to the water supply line. We have another device that injects Sanidate [sanitizer] into the water, which helps the vegetables keep better. A person puts product in at one end and it comes out

[rinsed clean] at the other.

We use it for winter squashes, melons, kale, chard, carrots, beets, lettuce, cucumbers. [The produce does] not come in contact with any brushes; it is only scrubbed by water pressure. And when we're done [washing produce], we send our containers through and it pressure-washes them.

How did this grant affect your wash-pack operation?

It's increased our production tremendously and really changes what kind of crops we're able to do profitably.

Prior to the project, a big carrot pick for us would have been 100 bunches of carrots – and someone would have to stand there with a hose for two to three hours. With this machine, we're able to clean and cool 200 bunches of beets, 400

bunches of carrots with two people in an hour's time.

Was it easy to use right away?

There is a big learning curve. When we first turned it on, we shredded so many carrot tops with the high pressure! But we've figured out how to adjust it over time, and we've really been able to maximize what we get out of the machine as a result.

There was a lot of support connected to the grant through UVM Extension. UVM Extension put together a video conference call with several farmers and the manufacturer to help us troubleshoot.

How else did the grant affect your farm?

It has increased the quality of the pack-out experience for our employees. Having equipment like this – versus having to stand there with a scrub brush or a hose – helps us retain employees.

Grants also helped other farmers get this same piece of equipment. Climbing the learning curve is a lot quicker when we work together and share. So a grant program like this puts a lot of farmers together going in the same direction. It didn't just push us forward, it pushed a lot of us forward.

How does produce safety fit into your vision for the future of your farm?

Maintaining quality is how we keep our customers.

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GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT:

Dry Brook Farm

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

George Hollister raises 35-40 beef animals each year on Dry Brook Farm in West Pawlet. He has spent the last two decades fixing up that property, which in his words was “pretty run-down” when he purchased it.

Prior to applying to the Best Management Practices (BMP) program, an earthen heavy use area for the farm’s beef herd was located near a water source at the bottom of a hill. The site was consistently wet, and George had trouble managing his manure, especially in the winter and shoulder seasons when the cattle spend a significant amount of time concentrated in the area.

George was able to remedy this issue with financial and technical

assistance from the Agency’s BMP program. Over several years, Agency engineers worked with Dry Brook Farm to install surface water diversion above the site to keep runoff from the adjacent hill from running through the heavy use area, put a roof over the area to keep it drier, and installed concrete so that George can better manage the manure that collects in this area and remove it to an appropriate stacking site.

Overall, this ~\$60,000 project is estimated to ensure at least 250,000 gallons of clean water are annually diverted from this heavy use area, preventing the water contamination and off-site movement of the contaminated runoff.

BMP grant funding provided 90% cost-share on the total construction cost, which included labor contributed by the farm.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) also provided supplemental funds on the project. On this particular project, George’s contribution did not include any cash outlay by the farm. “I did a lot of sweat equity, which you wouldn’t necessarily be able to see just from looking at it,” George shared in an interview. He also elected to

fund some additions to the project, such as electrical connectivity and water out to the barn, that were not part of his grant funding, but which he decided were worth it to make the barn more useful for his farm.

“I think [BMP] is a good program” George shared, noting that he is happy with his new winter housing facility, but that he probably

would not have done this building project without the financial and technical support he received through the BMP program.

For more information on the BMP program and to apply, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp or look for the BMP deadline reminder box in this edition of *Agriview*!

Best Management Practices Program Applications Due April 1, 2021

Applications to receive technical and financial assistance through the Agency of Agriculture’s Best Management (BMP) Program are due April 1, 2021. While BMP applications can be submitted at any time, applications received prior to April 1 will be given priority consideration for assistance in 2021. Applications submitted after April 1 will be evaluated in the following calendar year. Due to

the increased demand for BMP assistance, submission of an application does not guarantee grant funding or assistance. Applicants will receive a response from the BMP program regarding their application status prior to July 2021.

The BMP Program provides assistance to farmers in the implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality. Practices eligible for BMP

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Barnyard area before (left) and after (right) implementation of a heavy use area protection BMP. This project reduced erosion and surface runoff of agricultural waste.

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



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<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/>

Reports From The Field

(Jericho) This has been our busiest January ever, setting records for winter roots and greens sold per week, with the last week of January bringing us an all-time record for the farm. We are happy to “make hay while the sun shines” but missing our winter hibernation period. At least the skiing is good! The mild fall resulted in bounteous winter greens, and we are still harvesting fresh greens every week for our CSA and farmstand.

After several winter growing seasons experimenting with different planting dates and being foiled by Mother Nature with warm sunny falls followed by cold cloudy falls, we have given up trying to get it just right and decided earlier planting is just better, even if the greens do get too big too fast in the fall. It's more profitable to cut them earlier and overlap a mild extended field season than to not have them size up at all, and often if they size up too much, we can sell them as a different/bigger-leaved product and make

it work that way.

First tomatoes are seeded and up, ready for grafting in a couple weeks. Started the tomatoes this year in the very first cooler we built for the farm, which is basically just a well-insulated room, and given its small size and tightness we are finding the grow lights themselves give enough heat to keep it warm all day, just needs a small space heater at night when lights are off. Enjoying the bright sun and lengthening days and looking forward to a rocking 2021!

(Alburgh) Still pretty quiet time of year with no greenhouse going yet. One note of interest: Tetsukabuto squash from JSS is still in perfect condition in storage. This is an interspecific hybrid between c. Maxima and c. Moschata with huge yield (30,000 to 40,000 lbs/acre), high brix, and excellent eating quality. But the big thing is storage! The last 200 cartons we packed had just one bad squash. I am thinking it will last well into April. And customers love it.

(Westminster West) Here we go again! First trays of seeded strawberries are up, and many herb trays seeded on the heated propagation benches. Increasing production a little bit over last year as we do get maxed out labor-wise. All the crew is returning including the delivery driver, so very grateful for our good fortune.

Just ordered some new potato equipment from Poland, seem like good value for the money and there is a dealer network here for parts which is always important. Some other upgrades

underway as well as winter repairs keeping me busy. No winter vacation this year, stay at home and stay busy is fine, doing more innovative cooking now, I should try making bread! Still unsure how the farmers market will function this year. We did not attend last year because of COVID-19 concerns and not sure what it will be like this spring and summer, so hard to make plans. Good snow cover here, so hoping garlic is happy and already anxious to see them emerge!

(Newbury) We just this week harvested the last of our beet greens from under the snow. Still digging beets, starting alliums, celery, and celeriac this week.

(Elmore) Our winter tunnels are holding up well and our peach trees inside look good as do our remaining greens and cuttings beds and seedling beds. It has been a difficult winter of store buyers not getting back to us to reorder our black walnuts, jam, or frozen blueberries, which is surprising and frustrating. We have the products people want but it is sometimes hard to get the food to the people. We have tried front porch forum and selling directly to customers this winter and this has had some success.

Some changes planned for the current growing season are have crew lined up well in advance of needs, focus on what we can do well and do more of it, and less of what we are struggling with. Consolidate our operations to have one area for customers to interact with and the rest of the farm just for crew to be working and growing what we then

bring down for pickup and shipping out.

Very grateful for a crew that works hard and is kind to each other. especially during COVID time. the camaraderie and the patience and the dedication of a devoted crew goes a long, long way.

VVBGA Annual Meeting Presentations Now Posted

Click on links in the meeting agenda to view presenter's slides. Check out the videos by commercial members; follow the link to the VVBGA YouTube channel. Stay tuned for the audio recording of the meeting, posted soon.

Seasonally Relevant Resources From UVM Ag Engineering

Shedding Light In The Shed:

It is a great time of year to think about adding some lighting to work areas. We cover how much light to consider and various options.
<http://go.uvm.edu/lighting>

Germ and Growth

Chambers: If you are thinking about building or revitalizing a germination or growth chamber, take a look at our guide and collection of examples.
<http://go.uvm.edu/growthchambers>

Better Tunnel Ventilation:

Have you had issues with molds and mildews in your tunnels? Consider some ways to increase ventilation.
<http://go.uvm.edu/tunnelventilation>

Monitoring And Alarms:

Tired of worrying about whether the start house heater is actually running at night? We've got a list of remote monitoring options that work on everything from a hard-wired circuit to cellular data plans.
<http://go.uvm.edu/monitoring>

Grower Survey Related To Cleaning And Sanitizing

Struggling with cleaning and sanitizing practices? You are not alone.

You asked, we listened, and now we have a few follow-up questions. Partners at the University of Vermont, Cornell University, USDA, and National Farmers Union Foundation are working to develop a new training program to help small and medium-scale farmers take their businesses to the next level of safe and efficient vegetable handling systems.

Do you have a few minutes to complete a short survey to help us? The voice of farmers is invaluable to the process. To learn more about the project visit
<http://go.uvm.edu/scrub>

New Web Sites: Reminder

The UVM Extension web site www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry is kaput, replaced by <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

The VVBGA has its own web site now, www.vvbga.org It is where you go to join or renew your membership, and if you want, to create produce safety and soil health plans.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale:**BEES AND QUEENS****McFarline Apiaries**
Untreated bee breeding

VT 5 frame Nucs and deep singles
\$200-\$300, Available May-June
MCF Queens \$30: June to end of July
tmcfarline2@yahoo.com

www.mcfarlineapiaries.com

802-537-3294

Call or email now for details

**Cattle**

2 Registered Guernsey cows:
Certified A2A2, milking
75- 80lbs, both sired by
Welcome JT – \$1200 each.
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heifer due late August A2A2
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22 Jersey cows 2 bred heifers.
4 fresh Jan, 2 Feb, 3 due
Mar, 4 April, 1 May, 2 June.
Can be reg. Feed grain hay
pasture. 802-775-3846

3 breeding age bulls- one
Hereford, 2 angus for
breeding or beef. Asking
\$850 each or will consider
trading for Hereford heifers.
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Angus Bulls for sale good
genetics, calving ease bulls.
Please call 802 533 9804.
Greensboro, VT 05841

Retirement sale: 26 crossbred
organic cows, 4 are registered
Jersey, rest are Jersey,
Shorthorn, Ayrshire and
Holstein mix. AI bred to
Jersey or Swedish Red to
calve in spring and summer.
On November 10 still
producing 45 lbs. on pasture
and 10 lbs grain with 4.4%
BF 3.3%P. BTSCC 150.
\$45,000 for this very gentle
group. Also available 8 well-
grown crossbred heifers due
in March \$10,000 (802)623-
6584

High quality organic registered
Holstein, springing and bred

heifers available. Spring
Brook Farm 802-673-
9061/673-3810

Equipment

NDE sawdust/shavings
spreader. Can be mounted on
3-point hitch or skid steer.
Benson. Pictures on request.
Best offer. 770-8060.

John Deere 440B Log Skidder
for sale. \$10,000 Call Henry
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Riley stationary hoof trimming
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Lightly used and excellent
shape. \$4500 OBO. 2012
Doda 780 separator with
new screens for sale;
excellent shape;used very
little; \$20,000.00 OBO Bulk
milk tanks for sale: (2) One
is \$000 gallon Boumatic
Dairy Kool, excellent
condition-\$24,000.00. OBO.
The other is 1500-gallon
DEC, also excellent
condition-\$8000.00. Double
10 Boumatic parlor for sale:
reel, front exit with ATO
and meters; auto ID and
sort gate; excellent shape-
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JD 350 Dozer. New treads,
many new undercarriage
parts. Winch. Runs well.
\$15,000. Thistle Hill Farm
info@ThistleHillFarm.com or
802-457-9349

3 point hitch fertilizer
spreader 500# works well
350.00. 802 384 3553 and
wallysdomesticzoo@gmail.com

25,000 Winco PTO Generator
on wheels. New Holland
518, 519 Manure spreader.
254 white Harrows 10 ft
good shape. 3 Furrow plows
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ft Hay elevator – red. 802-
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IH 843 Combine Cornhead;
IH 7ft windrow head for
881 Gehl 350 spreader;
5 ton and 25-ton grain bins;
Case 580 backhoe for parts;
Case 850 drive sprockets;
85,000 BTU wood coal
furnace. Call 802-770-0959

Equine

Icelandic Walking horse
cross. He is 14 hh 2 years
old gelded and UTD on
shots trims and worming
and coggins and is an easy
keeper. He is a beautiful
yellow dun with striping.
He will be sturdy and
medium sized. He can trot
and is also gaited. He needs
knowledgeable home and
trainer. He is not spooky
and very friendly and polite.
\$900 B.O. 802-384-3553 and
wallysdomesticzoo@gmail.
com

Farm & Farmland

For Lease: 10 acres of organic
meadow in Brandon,
currently in alfalfa.
Producing roughly 12-15
tons per year in dry hay.
Three-year lease available,
price negotiable, but
approximately \$600/yr
802-247-8459.

Private Horse Farm. 17 +
acres. Covered small arena.
Large sand ring. Insulated
stable with 3 oversize stalls,
attached paddocks, feed/
tack room, hay storage, grass
pastures with board fencing.
Vermont country open
concept farmhouse. Three
bedrooms, office, sunroom.
Solar, cell phone reception,
internet. Workshop, chicken
house, orchard, stream
trails, woods, views. Close to
Dartmouth College and DH
Medical Center. Equipment
and supplies extra. \$549,999.
Call 802-785-4410.

General

Shelburne/ 5-gallon pails
with handles. \$.75 each.
Negotiable for volume
purchase. 802-999-4644.

Boumatic pipeline - \$2500
+/-230ft / 2inch / 46 Stalls
stainless steel milk line
including vacuum line, wash
sink, 3 units, control box,
and receiver jar is \$2,500.
\$4,000 with vacuum
pump. Call 802-446-2791
Wallingford. Ask for Jerry.

Hay, Feed & Forage

Good quality certified
organic Haylage stored in
Ag Bags and large round
bales 1st,2nd, and 3rd cut.
Delivery available. 802-988-
2959 or 802-274-2832

Quality Canadian hay for sale,
big/small squares wrapped,
or unwrapped, round bales
wrapped or unwrapped,
1st, 2nd, 3rd cuts available.
Switch grass and straw
available, call Richard at
802-323-3275

2019 1st cut Timothy and
clover hay \$ 5.00 a bale plus
delivery fee. Call 603-256-
8422

1000 tons corn silage,
processed in Colchester.
50 @ ton 802-272-3478
or 802-223-1370 or email
sethgardner@hotmail.com

Excellent quality first cut
wrapped round bales;
baleage. Shelburne VT
Call Andy 802-598-6060.
Analysis available upon
request.

2019 1st Cut 4X4 Wrapped
Round Bales for Sale \$40/
Bale, 2019 2nd Cut 4x4
Wrapped Round Bales
for Sale \$45/Bale, South
Pomfret, call Tom at 802-
457-5834

Organic haylage 12% protein
\$45 per ton, 15% protein
\$55 per ton. 802-537-2435

4x4 round balage mixed grains
cut late June. \$30 802-325-
3707

1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don
Pettis, 802-265-4566.

1st, 2nd & 3rd cut haylage

and corn silage for sale at
the bunk. Call Peter Gebbie
802-533-2984, leave a
message.

June 15th cut mixed Hay,
great quality, Will Load, 4'
X 4' Round Bales, \$40/bale,
quantity discount/cash prices
available. Westford, 802-355-
2930

Certified Organic First Cut
Wrapped Round Bales for
sale. Clover, Timothy and
mixed grasses. Test samples
and delivery available. Call
Matt 802-558-3879.

Vetch & rye seeds for sale,
mixed in 50 lb. bags, \$1/lb.
certified by Vermont Organic
Farmers.Thornhill Farm, 198
Taylor Road, Greensboro
Bend, VT 05842, todd@
thornhillfarmvermont.com,
802.441.3176

ADDISON COUNTY

1st cut 4x5 round bales never
wet. Good horse & cow hay.
802-948-2627 or 802-558-
0166

Certified organic, small square
bales always stacked and
stored under cover, 35-40lbs/
bale. \$4/bale, discounts
available for large quantities.
802-989-0781 for inquiries.

Hay for Sale in Addison, VT.
Large square bales and
small squares. \$50-60 for
Large, \$3.50-4.50 for Small.
Delivery Available. Call Jack
802-989-8968

Hay for sale. \$3.25 bale. 802-
377-5455

73 1st cut 5ft diameter round
bales. \$30-\$35Orwell 802-
948-2211

Straw for sale - \$7/bale for
50 or more. \$8/bale for less
than 50, \$6/bale for all in
the barn, approx. 350. from
our winter rye harvest in
August. certified organic.
Thornhill Farm, Greensboro
Bend, 05842, todd@
thornhillfarmvermont.com,
802-441-3176

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Corn Silage 1000 ton plus.
Haylage 500 ton plus. Round
bales 4x4. Square bales
small. 802-394-2976

CLASSIFIEDS

CALEDONIA COUNTY

Square baled hay- Top quality, VOF certified organic, generous sized. 1st cut \$4.50/bale, 2nd cut \$5.50/bale at the barn in Barnet. 802-592-3088

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

Round bales for horses. Clean first cut timothy mixed grass, quality net wrapped 4' X 5' bales. Never wet. \$45. each. 802- 879-0391 Westford.

15 large 5x5 round bales mixed grass with some timothy and clover 800+lbs \$50 each. Call 899-4126.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good quality hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard and orchard sweet grass 18 to 20% plus protein large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load on direct delivery by trailer load. Mountain View Dairy Farm 802-849-6266

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/ bale. Certified organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge, Vt. 802-644-6598 or valleydream@myfairpoint.net.

ORANGE COUNTY

2019 first cut square hay bales for sale. \$4.00 per bale. Delivery available. Bonnie Kennedy, Chelsea, VT. 802-685-2292.

Approximately 375 ton of high-quality grass and clover first and second cut, cut extremely early in 2018. First finished May 22, second finished July 2nd. Tests high in energy and protein. 45% harvested "hay in a day" \$50 per ton. Chris 802-522-9485

ORLEANS COUNTY

Pure alfalfa for sale and also 1st, 2nd and 3rd cut big/ small squares, round bales, wrapped or unwrapped, straw and switch grass. Call Richard at 802-323-3275.

Organic Certified Silage for Sale: We will deliver from our farm or you can come



and pick up. Call for prices and delivery charge. 1-802-744-2444 or 802-274-4934 or 802-744-6553.

RUTLAND COUNTY

Good quality 1st and 2nd round bales available, wrapped and dried. Please call 802-446-2435.

WINDHAM COUNTY

2020 4X4 wrapped baleage. June cut. Certified organic, never wet. 802-254-6982

1st cut hay. Good horse hay. \$4.50 bale 802-254-5069

WINDSOR COUNTY

Hay for sale-400 square bales,

Reading, Windsor County Vt. \$3.50 per bale at the barn. Call 802-484-7240

4x5 dry round bales \$45.00 delivery available. 802-457-1376

Rolling Meadows Farm: square bales in the field or barn \$4.00. Delivery can be arranged at \$5.50. Very nice hay from fertilized fields in the South Woodstock and Reading area. Call 802-484-5540 or goodfarmvt@gmail.com. Ask for David.

1st. cut dry round bales for sale. Never been rained on, stored under cover. \$50. @ 1st. cut haylage bales for sale. \$45. Rte. 5 Weathersfield Bow 802 -546-4340.

Dry Round Horse Hay, \$50/ Bale. 200 Bales left. Call 802-356-5030.

Sheep

Sheep Feeders - DS Livestock: 8' long, 4' long and two hexagonal. 20 years old - all steel frames. Cost new

without shipping \$1,420. Package price \$475. bearmountainfarmVT@gmail.com (802) 394-7852

A pure bred (w/papers) Romney Ram 3 years old, 1 pure bred (w/papers) Shetland ram for sale. 4 icelandic/romney ewes for sale various ages/colors (certified organic) 422 4704 leave message.

Buying Lambs- 40 lb and up & 1.75/ lb live weight. Call 802-674-2417. Pick up available

Wanted

F350 or 450 flatbed dump. Dutch belt heifer calf and black white face bull calf. 603-336-0017

Looking for several 4-spoked 4 ft. diameter pin wheels for an old Farmhand rake. The 90-degree rod hole holding the pin wheel on is 2 1/4 inches in diameter. Call 802-457-2218

Strategic Plan

continued from page 1

a number of interrelated recommendations from across the food system briefs.

"While we recognize that it would be nearly impossible to include every recommendation for advancing the food system, we are confident that the priority strategies put forth in the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan lay out a clear path forward to continue this important work," says Abbey Willard, Agriculture Development Division director, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. "The global COVID-19 pandemic has showed us just how much more we still have to do to strengthen our state and regional food system, shorten supply chains and

expand our ability to feed Vermonters."

The Plan contains an easy-to-use explanation of how to navigate the document and promises insight for just about anyone working in agriculture and the food system. For producers there are briefs that pertain to their particular products such as dairy, goats, grains,

and much more, briefs that provide insight on various market channels such as grocery stores, restaurants, and others, and briefs that cover issues of interest to all types of production including climate change, consumer demand, marketing, supporting future farmers, and more. Briefs and the whole Plan can

be downloaded at www.vtfarmtoplate/plan. Paper copies can be requested by emailing info@vsjf.org.

"This is an impressive step as we look to the future of agriculture. We will use this Plan and work with our important partner, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund," says Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts. "We are very excited to build on the progress we have already made to grow the economy, make Vermont more affordable and protect the most vulnerable. This report will guide us for years to come."

Any food system organization, business, or industry association can contact info@vsjf.org to learn about upcoming presentations, webinars and how to engage in the Plan's implementation.



Vermont Farm Utilizes Latest Technology To Identify Livestock

By Trevor Audet, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The cows at Kenyon's are getting fit with a new piece of hardware.

"We're kind of transitioning to the computer age and using technology more so it's an easy way to be able to keep track of your cows," said Hanna Martini, Kenyon's Farm.

Martini is helping Doug Kenyon and his Waitsfield farm utilize new technology to improve record keeping and keep better track of his cattle. Each cow on the farm is now being equipped with a radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag. The new tag is a small button that contains an embedded microchip attached to the ear of the cow. Each tag and chip have the same unique 15-digit number—one for visual identification and one to use with an electronic reader. Workers can scan the ear tag with a handheld RFID reader, and that information is then sent from the reader to a handheld device that



Above: Hanna Martini preparing RFID tags for use.
Inset: Close up of RFID tag.

holds all the data on each individual cow.

"We will furnish the farm the RFID tags to get started," said Jim Cameron, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

Cameron has worked with Kenyon's to acquire RFID tags supplied by the United States Department of Agriculture to the Vermont

Agency of Agriculture at no charge for use in Vermont cattle. Farms do have to purchase the RFID reader and software that collects the data.

"Doug does not have an iPhone and I don't think he's

going to get one anytime soon. I can use it with my app on my phone makes it happen in real time, but it also has a save mode so I can give him the scanner himself and he can go out and scan things," said Martini.

"These are official tags," said Cameron.

State law requires all livestock transported within and out of Vermont to be officially identified prior to leaving the property of origin. Imported livestock must also be officially identified before entering Vermont. Livestock include dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and camelids.

"Hopefully, it will make things easier and also save some time," said Martini.

"RFID technology being used as official tags is not a requirement now, but someday it might be. So, let's get ready now and start using it so we're familiar with it," said Cameron.

The annual number of free RFID tags cattle farmers may receive is dependent on farm size. The Agency also has a smaller supply of free RFID tags for pigs. To learn more call the Animal Health Section at (802) 828-2421 or email your request to agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov.

Joe's Brook Farm *continued from page 8*

Vegetables are supposed to be good for you – so making sure that's always the case is really important. Produce safety is one of the most important things on our farm, and it will continue to be.

To learn more about the Produce Safety Improvement Grant program visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram. To get in touch with the Vermont Produce Program, email AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov or call (802) 461-5128.

Last Call for Vermont's Economic Stimulus Equity Program

By Abbey Willard, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

You may have already received an email from the Agency of Agriculture about the Vermont Economic Stimulus Equity Program and the potential eligibility for Vermont farm workers to receive a stimulus payment. It is the Agency's hope that this article can assist you in sharing this program opportunity with your farm workers who may be eligible to receive a state-supported stimulus payment, prior to the application deadline of March 1, 2021.

About the Economic Stimulus Equity Program

Last fall, the Vermont Legislature created the Vermont Coronavirus Economic Stimulus Equity Program and allocated \$5 million to offer stimulus resources to those indi-

viduals previously denied federal stimulus payments due to their or someone else's immigration status. Since then, many partners, including The Vermont Community Foundation, Migrant Justice, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO), and Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) stood up this program and orchestrated an application and payment process that will keep applicant information secure and confidential.

Vermont Immigrant Families COVID Fund

This program, known as The Vermont Immigrant Families COVID Fund, can provide every eligible adult with a \$1,200 payment plus an additional \$500 per eligible child. This program is an important opportunity to support many farm workers who play a critical role in keeping our agricultural industries running and our working landscape viable.

Please Share with Your Farm Workers

The Agency of Agriculture hopes you will share this information with any of your farm workers who may be eligible for a stimulus payment and offer assistance with completing the registration form, which can be found online, if necessary.

How to Apply

To participate in this program, eligible adults should complete the VT Immigrant Families Covid Fund registration form by end of day March 1, 2021. The registration form takes only 5 minutes to complete.

The form will help the program determine if an applicant is eligible for the fund and how best to provide a stimulus payment. The application is translated into multiple languages, and frequently asked questions provide more information.

Questions and Assistance

If you or your farm work-

ers have questions or need assistance to complete the registration form, please contact Program Manager Indra Acharya at indra@vtcovidfund.org or by phone at (802) 559-0679.

Thank you for your ongoing contributions to our

agricultural community. We greatly appreciate you sharing this economic stimulus payment assistance opportunity with any farm workers that may benefit.

Please reach out to us or the Program Manager listed above with any questions.

Best Management Practices

continued from page 9

include:

- manure storage,
- composting stack pad,
- barnyard runoff collection,
- gutter/ditch clean water diversion,
- laneway development and stream crossings,
- exclusion fencing and watering facilities, and
- milk house waste collection and treatment.

Visit <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp> for more information on the BMP Program or to find an application. If you have any questions, or to request a BMP application by mail, please contact the Agency engineer who works in your area:

Franklin, Grand Isle:

Andrew Mitchell
(802) 505-5125, Andrew.Mitchell@vermont.gov

Dillan Westcom
(802) 522-6962, Dillan.Westcom@vermont.gov

Orleans, Essex:

Jenn Lacy
(802) 505-5090, Jennifer.Lacy@vermont.gov

Chittenden, Lamoille, Washington, Caledonia:

Matt Gardner
(802) 622-4612, Matt.Gardner@vermont.gov

Addison, Rutland:

Jason Bradley
(802) 461-3065, Jason.Bradley@vermont.gov

Orange, Windsor, Windham, Bennington:

Amer Suvalic
(802) 522-4305, Amer.Suvalic@vermont.gov



Pruning and Other March Gardening Tips

By Charlie Nardozzi,
Senior Horticulturist
National Gardening
Association, and
Dr. Leonard Perry,
Extension Professor,
University of Vermont

Pruning trees and shrubs, cutting back ornamental grasses, and checking perennials for frost heaving are some of the gardening tips for this month.

The days are longer, the sun is warmer, and sooner or later the buds of trees and shrubs will start growing. Best to finish pruning just in case winter suddenly releases its grip. Remove dead, diseased, and rubbing branches, and do any thinning needed to open up a tree canopy to more air and sunlight. Cut broken branches back to a main branch or the trunk rather than leaving stubs. Wound sealer generally isn't necessary. Wait to prune spring-flowering shrubs until right after bloom. Wait to prune maples and birches until after they leaf out, otherwise their rising sap will run or "bleed" from open wounds.

Before the new shoots emerge, cut back last year's stalks of ornamental grasses. Hand pruners will do the job for small plants, but electric hedge trimmers make quick work of large specimens with dense growth. If possible, chop the stalks before adding them to the compost pile or using them as mulch so they will

decompose more quickly.

Cut back upright grasses such as feather reed grass, switchgrass, moor grass and miscanthus. Don't cut back too far, only 15 to 24 inches above the soil surface, otherwise you may cut off some of this season's growing points buried in stems. Only cut back old flower stalks from mounded grasses such as blue oat grass and blue fescues, leaving their mounds of foliage. Pull off any old dead, loose and brown leaves. Every few years blue fescues should be dug up and replanted as they tend to rise up over time and get bare bases.

Take a walk around your yard to check for perennials that may have heaved out of the ground, exposing their roots to drying winds. Gently tamp them back into the soil or if the soil is too frozen, surround them with mulch as protection, tamping down later.

When the temperature climbs to 50 degrees in early spring and the wind is low, move houseplants with scale or mealybugs outdoors to a shady spot and thoroughly coat the foliage with lightweight or summer oil. Then move the plants back inside. A forceful stream of water, repeated every week as needed, may be all that is needed to dislodge mealybugs. Check areas where leaves join stems for the white fluffy masses of the mealybugs. Check undersides of leaves for brown scales, or their smaller light-colored crawling stage.

Cabbage, broccoli, and other cole crops that can be set out in early spring all can be started this month. Sow slow-growing flowers such as pansies, begonias, and vinca early in the month. Sow verbena, petunias, geranium, and impatiens later in the

month. But wait until April to sow seeds for tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and most flower varieties that cannot be transplanted until the danger of frost is past. Check on the seed packet to see if seeds can be started indoors, or should be sown directly

in the ground when the weather warms up.

Other tips for this month include stocking up on your gardening supplies, visiting a maple sugarhouse or tapping your own maples, and taking your mowers in for tune-ups.

Bonus Recipe

Sweet Corn and Zucchini Pie

Feeds 6-8 people. Takes about one hour to prepare.

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons butter
- half of a yellow onion, diced
- 1 ½ cups sweet corn, (drained if canned, or defrosted if frozen)
- 2 large zucchini, sliced very thinly (about 4 cups)
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 ounces shredded cheese (Your favorite!)
- 4 eggs, beaten

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Heat the butter in a large, deep skillet over medium high heat. Add the onions, zucchini, and mushrooms. While the veggies saute, cut the corn kernels off the cob. Add them to the pan and continue to saute until the veggies are soft, 5-10 minutes. Remove from heat.

2. Once the mixture has cooled for a few minutes, stir in the basil, oregano, salt, cheese, and the beaten eggs. Line a pie pan (9-inch or larger) with parchment paper or just grease a pan with nonstick spray. Transfer the mixture to the pan. Arrange the top so the zucchini slices lay flat and look nice. Top with a little extra cheese for looks, cover with greased foil, and bake for



20 minutes. Remove foil and bake for an additional 5 minutes to brown the top. Let stand for 10-15 minutes before cutting into slices.

Notes

It will bubble up a little bit as it bakes, so put a pan under to catch drips if it's really full. Also, there was a little extra watery-ness (about 2 tablespoons) in the bottom of my pan when I sliced it, but the pieces held together perfectly so NBD. I think the moisture could be prevented by just being a little more patient before cutting. I sprinkled mine with fresh herbs (parsley and cilantro) like I always do on everything. Basil would also be yummy.

Register Your Beehives

By Brooke Decker, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The winter months can be a welcome time for beekeepers to reflect on the past year, repair or replace worn equipment, inventory supplies and make plans for the upcoming year. It is a time to order bees, pour through the beekeeping catalogs, and read up on the latest honeybee research.

For many beekeepers, the winter months can be a welcome time reflect on the past year; repair or replace worn equipment, inventory the season's supplies, and make plans for the upcoming year. It is a time to order bees, build new equipment, pour through the beekeeping catalogs, take online courses, and read up on the latest honeybee research.

While planning for the upcoming season, the Agency reminds all beekeepers that:

- Registration is required for all hives, even the one hive in the backyard.
- Apiary GPS coordinates and a Mite Mitigation Plan are required with each registration.
- A \$10 fee is due upon registration of each apiary location.
- An import permit from the Agency, is required for all bees and/or equipment being transported across state lines into Vermont. This includes package bees shipped through the mail.



- Any bees intended for sale must first be inspected and receive a health certificate from the Agency prior to sale.
- All apiary locations are mapped. Beekeepers should get prior approval for new apiary locations..

All this information and more can be found on the Agency's Apiary website:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division/apiary-program>

Before we know it, the snow will be melting and the bees will be flying.

For questions or more information, please contact Brooke Decker by phone 802-272-6688 or by email, brooke.decker@vermont.gov

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